

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An implantable device for repairing a regurgitant cardiac valve having two or more leaflets, an effective valve area, and a subvalvular structure wherein at least one leaflet has a prolapsing segment, comprising:

a structure configured for attachment to the prolapsing leaflet at the prolapsing segment without affecting the effective valve area, said structure defining a stable coaptation surface against which an opposing leaflet reversibly coapts during systolic contraction of the heart whereby the coaptation between the leaflets is normalized, the coaptation surface configured to extend freely beyond a free margin of the prolapsing segment when the structure is operatively implanted within the valve, the coaptation surface being configured to substantially mimic a normally functioning leaflet,

wherein the structure comprises a semi-rigid or rigid material sufficient to provide the stable coaptation surface and capable of withstanding pressures produced by movement of the valve leaflets and blood flow through the valve area thereby preventing regurgitation with coaptation between the leaflets during systolic contraction

wherein the structure has a proximal end which has a bifurcated configuration for positioning the free margin of the prolapsing leaflet therein.

2. – 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein said structure has a distal end configured to extend between the leaflets when operatively implanted within the valve.

8. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said structure has a distal end configured for affixation to the subvalvular structure.

9. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said structure is substantially planar.

10. – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein said coaptation surface defines an area of at least about 25 mm².

14. (Canceled)

15. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein said structure has a length in the range from about 5 mm to about 40 mm.

16. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1 wherein the prolapsing leaflet also has a billowing section and wherein the structure has a surface area sufficient to immobilize the billowing section.

17. (Original) The device of claim 1 wherein the valve also has a dilated annulus resulting in a gap between the prolapsing leaflet and the opposing leaflet during systole and wherein a portion of said structure has a length sufficient to bridge the gap.

18. – 47. (Canceled))